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# The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship



REV. WILLIAM H. LEACH

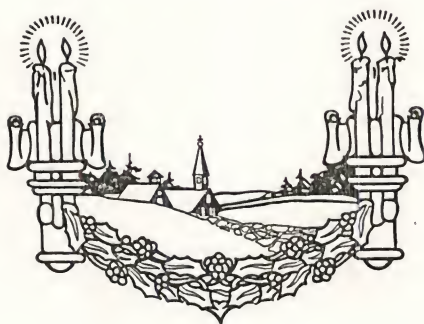
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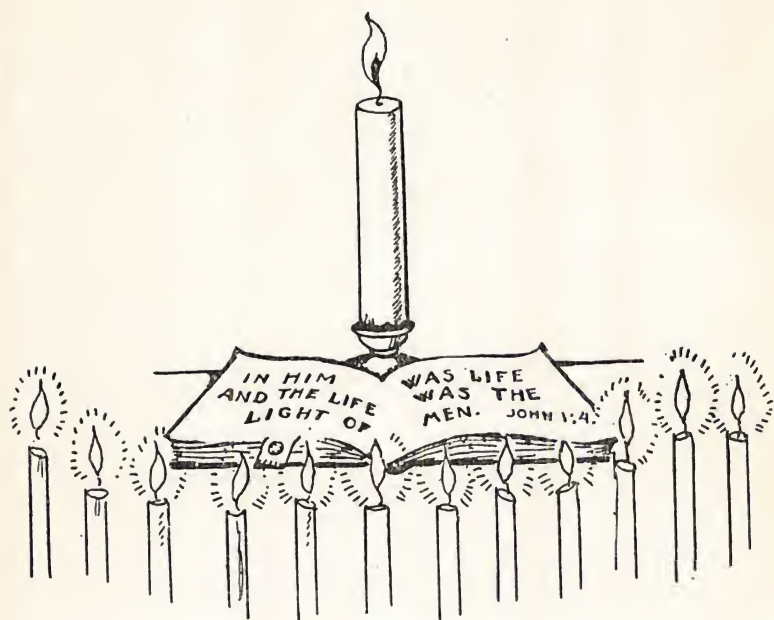
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THE USE OF CANDLES  
IN  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



Revised and Enlarged



The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;  
The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,  
The Light of the world is Jesus.

P. P. Bliss.

## FOREWORD

Dr. Leach discusses the use of candles in the *home*, in the *church societies* and in the *services of worship*. He gives specific ideas for their use and explains their symbolism. The material given includes the use of candles in the home, in youth services and in the worship services of the church. It is an intensely practical book because of the specific program material offered.



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## BY CANDLELIGHT

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God placed a candle in His hand—  
That to our earthly night  
There might be brought a beam of hope  
Forever burning bright;  
Each man also a candle bears,  
That when touched by His flame  
Becomes another glowing torch  
To glorify His name.

So thru the years the dark has fled  
Before the men who bear  
The candles they have lit from His,  
To carry everywhere;  
And from each of these lesser lights  
Have other lights been born  
Until from hand to hand has passed  
The brightness of His dawn.

A candle, as to wick and wax  
And form may perfect be,  
And yet, unless by fire touched—  
Can aid no man to see;  
So men need fire in their souls,  
A spirit made to flame  
By contact with that deathless spark  
God lit—when Jesus came.

William Ludlum.



## THE RECOVERY OF AN OLD TRADITION



ONE of the interesting developments in Protestant churches is the new emphasis placed on candle light services of one kind or another. The practice of using candles has grown by leaps and bounds during the past few years. Easter and Christmas find their use at the highest peak, but there is probably no period of the year when they are not of use in services of consecration and worship.

Fire has always been the symbol of life; candles in many instances have continued the tradition of burning fires. In ancient Rome those who presided over the temple worship were instructed under the penalty of death to keep the altar fires constantly burning. Should the fires be permitted to go out it prophesied dire tragedy.

The Jews used candles both in their service of worship and their home celebration. More than with most peoples, the Jewish religion is a matter of the home. Their most sacred observances were celebrated there, and, especially in the orthodox Jewish home, that is true today. The Feast of the Passover is a family feast presided over by the father. The burning of candles has always played an important part in that ceremony.

According to a modern writer, it has been the custom to



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furnish each boy in the family with candles for the eight days of the "Hanucca." He is to have one for the first night, two for the second night, and so on. The candles are lighted each night with the servant candle and set near the window where they may be seen by any who pass. In this way is the miracle of the Passover published. The Jewish family has also had its Sabbath candle, which is lighted on Friday night. With the lighting of the candles in the Jewish home a prayer is always said. It is a religious home service.

### Christian Worship

That the candle has played an important part in Christian worship is well known to all. Church interiors of an early date show their candelabra with burning tapers. The Roman and Greek Catholic churches specify the number and kinds of candles which are to be kept burning through the various masses and other services. The pure white Paschal candle made of bleached wax symbolizes the Christ; the unbleached candles about it may indicate the apostles, the church martyrs or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Paschal candle was the important light in the mediaeval churches. It sometimes assumed great proportions. In the time of Queen Mary it took three hundred-weight of beeswax to make the Paschal candle for Westminster Abbey. In 1517 the Paschal candle in Salisbury Cathedral was thirty-six feet high.

Very early the church saw a close analogy between the wax and Jesus. He was born from the virgin mother; so wax is produced by virgin bees. The wick in the candle tells of the

## The Recovery of an Old Tradition

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son of God enclosed in the human body, while the light symbolizes the light that shines to all men. To quote the aged Simeon, it is "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles."

The feast of purification which is traditionally observed on candlemas day is a gala day of candle lighting and candle processional. The people bring their candles to the altar, where they are blessed by the priest. Then with lighted candles they march from the church into the open air.

The Protestant reformation created a dislike of religious symbolism. Candles suffered the same fate as stained glass windows and pictures. The Lutheran and Anglican churches retained them, but most Evangelical bodies went to the other extreme with the result that their churches were very plain meeting houses. Churches were pulpit centered rather than altar centered.

There is a very noticeable tendency in the other direction today. Many of the newer churches have reestablished the chancel, with the altar at the focal point of worship at the back of the chancel. Some prefer to call it a communion table rather than an altar. With the change in architecture has come the re-entry of the candle. A simple cross at the back of the altar with two candles, one on either side, adds to the beauty of worship fitting. Some churches will prefer a Bible instead of the cross on the table or altar. The great light (The Bible) between two lesser lights makes a fitting symbolic representation.

Where the pulpit centered church exists there is still a place

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

for candles on the communion table, which sets in front of the pulpit. But, they should never be placed on the pulpit. The pulpit primarily is a reading desk for the preacher. Candles would not facilitate the spoken word.



## CANDLES IN THE CHANCEL



FROM the traditions of the past and experience of worship there has developed a fairly orderly procedure for the use of candles in Protestant worship. The altar is at the back of the chancel. On the altar or on a gradine which raises it a little above the table is placed the cross, which is the focal center of worship. It symbolizes the sufferings, death and triumph of the Christ and is the holiest symbol of our faith.

On either side of the cross may be placed a candle stick. The candle should not crowd the cross. If flower vases are used there should be two, each one spaced between the cross and one candle. These two candles are lighted before the beginning of the service. The one on the epistle or lectern side is always lighted and extinguished first. The candles symbolize the two natures of the Christ, the human and the divine.

The candles should never be as high as the cross. The best length is that when the lighted flame comes about to the cross arm of the cross. Such a proportion seems to give the best effect.

As is true in the case of most innovations there are some who will always overdo a good thing. The return of the candle to the Protestant church has seen this. We have heard of one church which keeps 120 candles lighted during the service. Such a number makes confusion and breaks down tradition and symbolism. However there is authority for using more than the two.



## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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The use of six candles is preferred by many and this has tradition to back up its usage. The six candles refer to the six days of creation or, as some will prefer, to the hour and day when Christ died. The use of the seven branched candle stick is approved for festival occasions. Seven was one of the sacred numbers of the Hebrews and has been given various symbolic meanings for Christians. The seven branched candle stick however should be reserved for the festival seasons of the year such as Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday and similar days.

If one is careful to observe tradition the candles used will be made of pure beeswax. New candles will be inserted in the holders for Advent, Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday. The candle sticks may be made of gold, silver, brass or wood. War-time restrictions on metals have increased the use of wood. Many attractive designs are available.

The paschal candle is not placed in the chancel but on the floor near the gospel side of the altar. It is a large candle which is lighted on the Saturday before Easter and kept lighted until Ascension. It symbolizes the forty days spent by our Lord on earth between his resurrection and his ascension.

## SERVICES BY CANDLELIGHT



MOST of the services which we call candlelight or candlelighting services have nothing to do with the traditional altar lights. Rather they are services held under the dim illumination of candles. It is well to divide the two types of service and keep the distinction in mind. A candlelight service is one where the sanctuary or other room is dimly lighted by candles. The candlelighting service is one in which the candles are lighted. The act of igniting them is part of the ritual.

For the first type of service candles are placed at various places through the building. In the dim light the service of worship is conducted. Experience has shown that under such conditions the worshipper finds it easy to forget the cares of the world and assume a spiritual poise.

The service may include processions led with lighted candles or individuals ushering with such candles but so long as the lighting is not distinctly a part of the service we call it a candlelight service.

The candlelighting service is very different. In this the lighting of the candles is used for the purpose of expressing devotion or loyalty. Or it may symbolize the lighting of the world by the spirit of the Christ.

The technique of the candlelighting service is basically the same in most programs. From a large candle which represents God, Jesus Christ, the Word of God or The Great Light, smaller candles are lighted. These in turn are used to light others. The



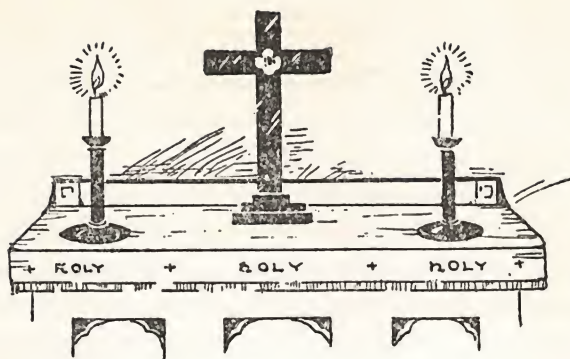
## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

passing of the light expresses the contagion of the Christian faith and binds the worshippers together in Christian fellowship.

In the candlelighting service the altar or communion table has thirteen candles. One is a large one which is in the center. This is the Christ candle. On either side are six smaller candles. These are the apostle candles. The Christ candle is usually lighted before the service starts. At the proper time the minister lights the twelve smaller candles. Then from these, he lights his own candles. The progression is clear. It starts with the Christ, then the apostles, then the minister of the church. Next may come the church officers, ushers or specially designated individuals. Lastly candles which have been supplied each worshipper are lighted.

In the past there have been times when the congregation has formed a procession and marched to the altar, each lighted his candle as he passed the pastor. The danger involved in that has become evident and the better practice is to have ushers light their candles from the pastor and then walk down the aisles of the church. At each pew the person sitting next to the aisle lights his candle from the usher. The person next to him lights his from the one next to the aisle. Then the light is passed on to the third person and so on.

The worshippers are not alone supplied with candles but should have holders which will protect their fingers and clothes from the dripping wax. While this method of lighting the candles does not remove all of the danger it does reduce it. Any church using a candlelighting service would have in mind the possibility of accidents and have some plan to take care of one if it should happen.



## COMMUNION BY CANDLE LIGHT



IF ALL worship services in our Evangelical churches the communion, it seems to me, is the most suitable for the candle light service. For years I have taken a part in the Maundy Thursday communion service in the Lakewood, Ohio, Congregational Church. It is one of the great services of the year. Six to eight hundred people gather there for the hour of silent communion and prayer. It is all in candle light.

Great candles in large wooden candlesticks have been set, suitably spaced, around the balcony and in the aisles on the main floor. In the opening part of the service the regular lighting is used but after the new members have been received and the time comes for the communion service the lights are dimmed and the church is lighted only by candles. One, of course, is on the communion table.

Following the administration of the communion there comes

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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what the minister calls "Tenebrae," a period that represents the time in Gethsemane including the betrayal. The minister continues the scriptural reading of the experience in the Garden. The experience of prayer as the three chosen disciples slept is read. He comes to the place which says:

"And he cometh the third time and saith unto them, Will you sleep now and take your rest? Already the time is come. . . . Rise up! Let us go! Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

At this point the ushers, who have been properly instructed, begin to extinguish the candles, one by one, and the room grows darker. The minister reading reaches the place where he says: "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled." At that point all of the candles are extinguished with the exception of the one on the communion table. Very dramatically the worshipper sees Jesus remaining alone and yet there still comes from him light. The prayer which follows is suitable for the moment.

"O God, Father of Jesus our elder brother; let these things sink deep into our hearts. Make us able, in our trial-time, to say 'Thy will be done.' Give us to see what is right and wrong in our hearts and in the world today. Help us to stand for the right even if we stand alone. Save us from cowardice which is selfishness. Never let us betray a good man or forsake a just cause; and finally may we and they be more than conquerors, through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. *Amen.*"

The benediction follows in the darkness, but the lights are restored immediately following its pronouncement.



## Communion by Candle Light

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A very effective procedure which ties the Maundy Thursday Communion with the Good Friday and Easter service has recently been described. At the conclusion of the service the Christ candle is still burning and is kept burning until every worshipper has left the room. When they return for the Good Friday service they find it burning. Christ is alone. At the proper place in this service when death takes the life of our master the light of the candle is extinguished.

When they come again to the church on Easter day they find the candle re-lighted. Christ lives.

While this service is particularly appropriate for Maundy Thursday a communion service held at the vesper hour is always appropriate. Some churches might find a new interest for communion if the hour were changed to late afternoon and the appeal of lighted candles used. The Second Baptist Church of St. Louis, Missouri, has for some years observed an Easter Vesper Candle Light Service. It comes late in the afternoon of Easter. In many churches the morning service is the great climax, the evening services appear as anti-climaxes. But the sweet service of fellowship adds luster to the day. Easter passes out with the spirit of communion.

Though I have found no confirmation of this in the ancient art of the Church I have always felt that that first Christian communion service held on the evening of the betrayal of the Christ must have been in the dim light of candles or oil lamps. It must have been in the dusk of evening when features were somewhat lighted by the artificial illumination and did not stand out as clearly as in the light of day. It is in such a setting that men's hearts grow kind and confidences are expected.



And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.  
—St. Luke 2; 16.

# "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

A CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE



*NOTE the progressive nature of this service. In the opening Call to Worship, Scripture verses are used to indicate the wistfulness of a people "in great darkness." This is followed by a prayer for light. As the service progresses light is given and the congregation, in the closing hymn, leaves the church, praying for further illumination.*

(This service is most effective staged in a dimly lighted church. On the communion table, arranged in suitable candelabra are thirteen candles. One large one is in the center. Six smaller ones are arranged on each side. The large one, alone, is lighted as the worshippers enter. To make the service most effective, doors should be kept closed until this candle has been lighted.)

## Organ Prelude:

A hymn medley composed of "Lead, Kindly Light," "The Morning Light is Breaking," "Watchman Tell Us of the Night."

Call to Worship: (Worshippers standing).

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death a great light is sprung up."

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"



## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

“That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

The Gloria Patri: (Worshippers standing.)

Hymn:

“Father of Lights” to tune “Ancient of Days.”

Father of lights, in whom there is no shadow.

Giver of every good and perfect gift!

With one accord we seek thy holy presence,

Gladly our hearts to thee in praise we lift.

Light of the world, thro’ whom we know the Father!

Pour out upon us thine abiding love,

That we may know its depth and height and splendor,

That heav’n may come to earth from heav’n above.

Thou art the Christ! To thee we owe allegiance.

May our devotion sweep from sea to sea,

Even as we, the gift from thee receiving,

Joyfully minister that gift for thee.

Amen.

Elizabeth Wilson and Helen Thoburn

An Affirmation of Faith: (To be said in Unison. Congregation Seated).

We believe that God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

We believe that God is Light; and if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

We believe that God is Love; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

## The Light of the World

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We believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.

We believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; and that God sent his Son into the world that the world should be saved through Him.

We believe that we are children of God; and that God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.

We believe that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

We believe that the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but that he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

The Service of Candlelighting:

(While organ plays Gounod's "Send Out Thy Light," two ushers bearing unlighted tapers march to the table.)

The Minister Speaks:

"On the table are thirteen candles. One alone is lighted. That represents our Christ. Arranged on either hand are six additional candles representing the twelve apostles. Judas hath fled and St. Paul is represented in the group. From the light of the Christ, we will now light the twelve other candles."

(Each usher lights his taper from the large candle and then lights six of the smaller ones on his side of the table.)

The Minister Continues:

"The apostles make a connecting link between the Christ and the Christian disciples of all times. From them we are to receive the torch and lighten the way of Christian faith. Your part is to join with us in singing the hymn of consecration. Let each word you sing be an invitation for light to enter your soul."

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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At this point some churches will wish to have the entire congregation unite in the service of candlelighting. To properly prepare for this the small candles, with suitable hand protectors should be distributed to the worshippers as they enter the church.

The congregation will rise, candles in hands. The ushers will pass along the aisles lighting the candles of the worshipper at the end of the pew. He in turn will light the candle of the person next to him. When all are lighted, the congregation remains standing for the singing of the hymn of consecration. Then the lights are extinguished and the congregation seated. The altar candles remain lighted for the entire service.

The Hymn of Consecration:

“Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers.” (Congregation Standing.)

The Pastoral Prayer: (Congregation still standing.)

A Choir Response: (To be selected.)

Offering and Choir Offertory:

The Sermon or Meditation:

Concluding Hymn:

“The Morning Light Is Breaking.” (Congregation Standing.)

Benediction:

Organ Postlude.

## Christmas Candles

CANDLES on my Christmas-tree,  
This is what they mean to me  
As they burn in bright array  
Turning darkness into day,  
Each a star of promise there  
Of the Father's love and care:

Star of Love and star of Light,  
Star of Hope and star of Right;  
Star of Faith and star of Truth,  
Star of Manhood, star of Youth;  
Star of Life, here and to be,  
Star that is the Soul of me.

Stars of Country, Church and Home,  
Mine wherever I may roam;  
And, all other stars above,  
Star of God's forgiving Love,  
That which at the Saviour's birth  
Gave Salvation to the earth.

As they burn in bright array  
Turning darkness into day,  
Each a star of promise there  
Of the Father's love and care;  
This is what they mean to me—  
Candles on my Christmas-tree.

William Ludlum.



## EASTER CANDLELIGHTING SERVICES



HE Easter candle services have been held at early dawn and, as has been described under communion service, in the late afternoon. The Easter symbolism is easily adapted to candles. For, after the dark Friday and Saturday, Easter brings the light.

The description of the candle lighting in one Easter Dawn service is given as follows:

### The Service of the Candles

After the candles have been distributed to the worshippers the minister lights his candle from an altar candle. Turning to the congregation he says, "Christ, the Light of the world, Who went into the night of death for us, is risen and hath brought life and immortality to light." Thereupon the ushers light their candles from that of the pastor and proceed to light the candle of the worshipper occupying the seat nearest the aisle. That worshipper in turn lights the candle of the

## Easter Candlelighting Services

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worshipper next to him, and so on, until all the candles are lighted. It is urgently requested that no lighted candles be tipped. Tip your candle only when lighting it. When all the candles have been lighted, the following may be said:

Minister: The Lord is risen! Hallelujah!

Congregation: The Lord is risen indeed. Hallelujah!





## CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROCESSIONAL



THE First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, Missouri, of which Joseph M. Garrison is the minister, has used a candlelighting service which combines the church and school exercises. The white gifts idea is used. After the organ voluntary, the worship proceeds in this way:

1. Two girls, dressed in flowing white garments, enter from the two sides of the rostrum with large lighted candles. They kneel on the two sides of the manger. Light in manger, lighted as they kneel. The position is held until the processional is completed. See later suggestion as to what to do after processional is completed.

2. Few moments of silence, no movement, organ may play softly after two girls, mentioned above, are in position.

3. Enter two girls with candles lighted for the two reading desks. The candles are placed in stands, and the two girls stand at their seats near the reading desks. Dress in choir robes and surplices.

4. Enter two boys, dressed in black robes and surplices. They come up to the reading desks and remain for a moment in silent thought.

Boy on left: Reading. Remain standing.

Glory to God, Glory to God!

Glory to God in the highest!

Peace on earth, good will to men,

Glory to God in the highest.

Jas. G. Larson.

## Church and Sunday School Christmas Processional

Chorus, The First Christmas Carol.

Slight pause.

Boy on right: Reading. Remain standing.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9: 6.

Slight pause. Remain standing.

Boy on left:

May the splendor of this great Name  
Shine and glow with a mighty flame,  
Filling thy life with its glorious rays,  
Filling thy spirit with Christmas praise.

Frances R. Havergal.

Slight pause. Remain standing.

Boy on right:

"Let every knee bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father." Phil. 2: 10-11.

Invocation.

Two boys who have been reading, lay down manuscripts on reading desks and step behind the reading desks toward the manger, assuming a posture and attitude of prayer.

Boy on left:

"O holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray!  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

"We hear the Christmas angels,  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel."

Phillips Brooks.

Boy on the right continues the prayer:

"Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for this Christmas day, its hallowed associations and blessed relationships. We bless thee for every heart made lighter, for every burden lifted, for every path made smoother, for the happiness brought to little children. In the face of thy marvelous goodness to us, we pray for the presence of Thy Spirit in our lives that we may walk gently, more helpfully and witness effectively for thee. We would rededicate ourselves to thy service; we would consecrate to thee our capacities, for thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, and ever. Amen."

Boy on left and right resume positions behind reading stands. Both boys and girls are standing.

### The Candlelight Processional

Up to this point those in processional have remained silent off stage in the two side rooms. Each is dressed in white sheet to resemble robe and provided with a holder with a candle in it. One by one they enter. One responsible for lighting each candle stationed at each door. Candles lighted just before each member of a present-day processional enters.

Organ picks up "We three kings of Orient are."

1. Enter the ancient procession, "Three Kings," three boys dressed as kings, bearing treasures, without lights. They make their way to the front of the rostrum and standing together

## Church and Sunday School Christmas Processional

they sing the song. They deposit their gifts around the manger, and exit on opposite side.

2. Enter a present-day procession. Organ picks up "O come, all ye faithful."

Candle light procession begins, moving down main aisles, passing in rear of church and back again to choir loft. They sing as they march, and deposit their candles in holders arranged around the choir. These are made ready beforehand. Two of the smaller members should lead. After entering choir loft, remain standing until two girls at the manger have left and deposited their candles in holders. All are standing at this time, readers and choir. All are seated as last candle is deposited.

3. The two girls, kneeling before the manger, stand and deposit their candles in holders just as soon as the last member of the choir is in place.

Now the scene is completely prepared for what follows, bright candles are burning and every one is seated.

Following this there is a program of scripture reading, recitation and song until the time comes for the presentation of the gifts. Then the program from the presentation of the gifts through the benediction is:

### The Procession of Love Gifts

Two girls and two boy readers stand together.

1. First boy reader on left.

Stands, pauses:

"Give unto the Lord the glory due his name."

2. Second reader, boy on right.

"Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it."



## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

The two boy readers and girl readers come down from the rostrum on the two sides and deposit their white gifts near the manger. They do not return to the reading desks, but stand on the side of the choir on either side.

Choir members pass their gifts, and return to choir.

Members of congregation are then invited to present their gifts.

Boy on right: "We invite the congregation to bring gifts at this time."

Organ may play softly during this period.

### The Dedication

After all gifts, white gifts and joy gifts are made, choir sings: "The Lord Is My Shepherd," anthem.

As they sing, three girls form tableau around the manger and the gifts.

### The Recessional

After the anthem, members of the choir and the congregation join together in singing,

"Joy to the world."

After first stanza, choir members still singing, take candles and join in recessional, going out side doors and remaining in side room, singing.

Girls forming tableau continue to hold position until after benediction.

## Church and Sunday School Christmas Processional

### Benediction

By the pastor, from rear of church:

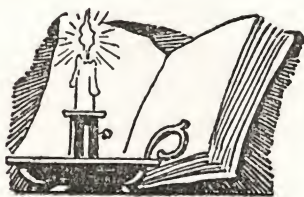
"Glory to God, Glory to God!  
Glory to God in the highest!  
Peace on earth, good will to men,  
Glory to God in the highest."

### Three-Fold Amen

From the two side rooms, chorus and organ. Three-fold Amen.

Girls forming tableau, after moment of silence, leave rostrum.

### Organ Postlude





## YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES



THE popularity of candlelighting services is well known among youth groups. Perhaps it has reentered our Protestant churches through them. The services have somewhat of a resemblance to camp fires around which they have gathered in youth conferences.

The candlelighting technique may be used in a simple opening service where, in the dim light of the candle, the meeting is opened by prayer. For this purpose the electric or other lights are turned low and the glow of candles from the table is sufficient for the service.

The leader speaks, repeating from the lines of John Oxenham:

"Lighten our darkness, Lord, we beseech thee,  
Here in the night we pray for light;  
O show us the light!  
Here in the darkness of thy rich grace,  
O show us thy face!  
Of thy great tenderness lead us,  
O thou all merciful heed us.  
Come in thy might, thou the all-light!  
Scatter our darkness, O Lord."

This may be followed by a hymn suitable for the opening of a service which, at the same time, has a note of consecration in it. "O Master, let me walk with thee," is a splendid one. As

## Young People's Services

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the last verse is sung which begins, "In hope that sends a *shining ray*," the lights in the room may be brought back to their normal strength.

### Service of Consecration

It is customary with some young people's groups to hold, at intervals, a candle light consecration service in which each member has an opportunity through the lighting of a candle to renew his Christian life. The plan of the service will be something along this line. The table will have upon it an open Bible, with a large candle on each side. The candles are lighted. In the dim candle light the opening hymn is sung and the prayer made. Then the leader speaks.

*Leader:* During the ages a burning candle has represented to many people the person and power of Jesus Christ. He is the light which came into the world of darkness. The light which radiated from him passed into his disciples. From them it passed into our fathers and they lighted their generation to God. Now the responsibility has fallen upon us. We must receive the light and bear the responsibility.

To each of you has been given a small candle. Are you willing to bring your candles to this Holy Book, the great light of Christians, and express your willingness to accept your Christian responsibilities through the lighting of your candles?

*Congregation:* We are willing.

(The leader ignites his candle.)

*Leader:* I have accepted my responsibility. Now will you accept yours. As the candles are lighted please form a crescent around the great light that we may join in prayer.

(One by one they come to the table, light the candle, and

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

form the crescent. When the lighting has been completed the leader leads in prayer):

Almighty God, our father and giver of light: hear us this night we pray Thee. As we profess our willingness to share the responsibility of giving Christian light to the world, accept our offerings. Make us one with Jesus Christ, our Lord, in our desire to redeem mankind. We pray even as he did pray:

Our Father, which art in heaven:  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

As the group sings "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult," the lights are restored and the individuals may take their seats.

### Service of Installation

Somewhat different is the program used by Rev. C. W. Black, Methodist minister of New Carlisle, Ohio, in installing the new officers of his †Epworth League. His program can easily be adapted to other young people's groups. The candle on the table which represents the Church is unlighted. At the back of the sanctuary stand the officers elect with lighted

†The Youth Fellowship.

## Young People's Services

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candles in their hands. While the congregation sings "Follow the gleam" these elected officers move slowly down the aisles to the chancel. They stand there while the Counsellor introduces them one by one to the pastor.

*Counsellor*:—"I present the following persons, who having been elected, are now to be installed as the officers of the Epworth League for the ensuing year."

(Reads list of officers elect.)

*Pastor*:—"It is my duty and privilege to install these officers as they, with other members of the Epworth League, have presented themselves at the altar of the church. The four candles which are carried by the four vice-presidents represent the four-fold work of the Epworth League: Worship, World Comradeship, Social Service and Recreation.

"This unlighted candle upon the Communion Table represents the church. The church can send forth its light to the world only as it is illuminated by the radiance of the lives of its members. As a symbol and pledge of our devotion and loyalty to Christ and His Church let us draw near with our lights and cause the candle upon the altar of the church to shine.

"Let us pause in silence as we sincerely dedicate our lives to the tasks before us."

(All bow in silent prayer.)

The singing of "I would be true," as a prayer, completes the service.



## CANDLES IN THE HOME



THE use of lighted candles on the table at the evening meal is one of the experiences which, more and more, Christian people are coming to appreciate. If some religious sentiment can be tied up with the lights they will have double significance. A candle in the home brings a symbolism similar to that of the open fireplace. They say, "Keep the home fires burning," and are a constant reminder that the spirit of trust and love always remains in the home.

### Dedication of the Home

The practice of dedicating home and the members of the home when a new house is occupied or a Christian family moves into it for the first time is a growing practice. A delightful little service for this purpose has been prepared by Dr. H. Augustine Smith. It takes but five minutes of time. It includes a fire lighting or candle lighting ceremony. The complete service follows:

#### HYMN—

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above."

Scripture—Christ in the Home. Luke 10: 38-42.



## Candles in the Home

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### Prayer

"Make this home a Bethany, our Saviour,  
Sit with us at the table.  
Draw us from our worldly cares, as thou didst draw Martha.  
Be our life, as thou wert the life of Lazarus.

"Show us, as thou didst Mary, the better part.  
We ask it in thy name."

### The Lord's Prayer

### The Ceremony of Light—

"God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all."  
(The lighting of the hearth fire, or the lighting of candles.)

"Ye are the light of the world.  
He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness,  
But shall have the light of life."

### Unison Psalm of Trust and Joy—Psalm 23

(Emphasizing the closing words: "Yea, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the HOUSE of the Lord forever.")

### HYMN— (Tune, St. Anne)

"In Christ there is no East or West,  
In Him no South or North;  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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In Him shall true hearts everywhere  
Their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord  
Close-binding all mankind." Amen.

The devotionally minded person will find other uses for the candles. Recently there has been introduced a little prayer altar for the individual. It is an added bit of furniture for living or bedroom which contains a place for the Bible or prayer book when one is in a kneeling position. Lighted candles on either side of the Bible add the devotional spirit. One woman testifies that she has two candles burning in early evening below a picture of The Christ. In the solemn glow of candle light the picture seems more impressive and leads to devotion.

For festive occasions, including weddings, candles always add to the occasions. The wedding table may well have a six holder candelabra, while Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner tables need the religious faith of the candle. A good grace to be given as the candles are lighted is:

"Bow always when you light a fire,  
Kneel reverently and thankful be  
For God's unfailing charity.  
And on the ascending flame inspire  
A little prayer that shall upbear  
The incense of your thankfulness  
For this sweet grace  
Of warmth and light!  
For here again is sacrifice  
Of your delight."

## Candles in the Home

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Let some one read this as the candles are lighted.

The Catholic custom of placing candles near the casket of the deceased is one which will probably spread. It is a symbol of Christian love, simply telling of the faith in the light which leads men not alone through this world but through eternity.



# A FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



SIMPLE candlelight service for the family on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning is a splendid thing. The following service has been recommended by the Commission of Evangelism and Devotional Life of the Congregational Churches.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

At dinner on Christmas Eve, let the whole family be together. Have an unlighted candle — only one — in the center of the table. Some families have a candle large enough to be lighted at each meal from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day.

When all are seated, and before the meal is served, let the Father say:

Father:

There would be no Christmas if it were not for the Christ-Child whose birthday it is. We must think of him tonight and tomorrow. The story of his coming is very beautiful and every Christmas we love to hear it. As I read it to us, again, let us be thankful that God so loved the world that he gave his son to be our saviour.

Read St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter I, verses 18-25.

Mother:

Years ago there was a belief that each Christmas Eve the Christ-Child came again to earth, and wandered from house to house looking for a place to rest. But people would be so busy



## A Family Christmas Eve Service

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feasting and preparing for Christmas that they never recognized him; and the poor Christ-Child shivered in the cold while Christians made merry in his honor, in their warm houses. There were many who wanted to welcome him, who indeed would be proud to have him as their guest. So they lighted candles, and put them in the windows of their homes, to show the way to the Christ-Child, and invite him to make their home his own. So, each year, we light our Christmas candle. We do not put it in the window, but in the center of our table. As it burns, its light stands for the love of our home for the Christ-Child, and our joy that he has come to us in spirit, even if we do not see him as we see each other.

Oldest Child:

(lights the candle, saying,)

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown  
When Thou camest to earth for me;  
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room  
For Thy holy nativity.

All the Family:

O come to our home, Lord Jesus,  
There is room in our home for Thee.

Father:

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee for the holy family in ancient Bethlehem, and for what the spirit of Christ has meant wherever hearts and homes have opened to receive him. Bless us in our joy together, and help us to live our love in ever fuller measure. Bless all who are homeless, and those whose homes are sad by reason of sorrow or misfortune. May we help to build a world in which there will be happiness for all. In the name of him who was laid in a manger, Amen.

## Thou Wilt Light My Candle



Lord, it is dark, the road is rough to go;  
I lift an unlit candle in the night,  
Behold it, Lord, within my upraised hand;  
Touch it to flame with Thine own heavenly light.

This slender waxen thing that is my faith,  
Fire it, Lord, with some divine white spark,  
Until its circle, widening at my feet,  
Will mark my certain way across the dark.

"Thou wilt light my candle" . . . thus assured  
I shall go forward through this unknown land;  
The way can never grow too dark, too long,  
For I shall bear Thy light within my hand.

—Grace Noll Crowell

(From "Light of the Years," published by Harper & Brothers.)

## A RECOGNITION SERVICE FOR THOSE IN THE ARMED FORCES



THE growing desire to recognize those who have gone from the Church to serve in the armed forces has given spontaneous rise to candlelighting services suitable for the purpose.

One effective way is to have a large candle at the center of the altar or communion table. A large "V" is placed on an incline so that the upper arms are several inches off from the table while the base may be at the table level. This "V" has been equipped with candle holders and candles. There should be a candle for each man and woman who has gone into the service. In one church blue candles are used for the service candles except in the case of those who have lost their lives. White candles are used for these.

Only the large candle is lighted. The smaller ones are to be lighted during the service by relatives or close friends of the person represented.

In one instance the large candle represented the spirit of liberty. The young men and women received this light symbolically because they are carrying on that light in a darkened world. The other churches may prefer to have the large candle represent the Christ who is the author of human liberty and have the lighting act pass on this heritage.

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

Each family which is represented should be notified in advance. Careful data should be secured for each person represented by a candle. At the proper time the minister shall read the name of the service man or woman, giving a few words regarding his record and then add "The candle which symbolizes his life will now be lighted by ——."

As the candles are lighted other lights in the auditorium should be extinguished until there remains only the large candle and the "V" with its many small candles. At this point the prayer which is the climax of the service should be given by the minister.

The following prayer by Dr. John G. Fedders is a splendid one to use:

"O Lord of Life, Strength of the strong, and Best Guide of our youth, hear the petitions we direct to Thy throne of grace. The anguish of a nation's strong fatherhood and the tears of its sacrificing motherhood, prompt our prayer for the lads of our land. They are leaving our homes and altars to heed their country's call. They are shouldering arms, flying planes and manning ships in defense of the flag. Here in the friendly pew and at the family altar we follow them in dusty march, airy flight and stormy sea with our petitions for safety. May their remoteness from sanctuary and home not lessen their grip on the virtues of a royal manhood. Defend them, O Lover of Youth, from the sinister, soul destroying scarlet siren whose lures lead only to dark disgrace and dishonor. These are our sons, Thy choice gift to us, and our hearts' desire is that they may serve our coun-



## A Recognition Service for Those in Armed Forces

try's cause unsullied and unstained. Above all, dear Lord, guide them by Thy Holy Spirit that they may keep sacred in the crowded routine of each day, some fraction of time for a prayer tryst with Thee. Remind them of their baptismal covenant and confirmation convictions that they may be true soldiers of the Cross. And our hearts' plea, O Father of all the nations of the earth, is that enduring peace may soon come to supplant the sword, hate giving way to love and brutality to brotherhood. In the Name of our Elder Brother, the Prince of Peace, Amen."

Following the prayer, the entire congregation, standing in the dim candlelight should join in singing the first verse of "America." Then the benediction is pronounced. After the benediction, the light may be restored, but the candles should be kept burning until all have departed.

## A MEMORIAL CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE



HIS service is one which may be very profitable for the church or society which promotes it. It was originally used in the First Congregational Church, Romeo, Michigan. Mrs. Margaret Ratcliffe, wife of the minister of the church, was largely responsible for its promotion and success.

Letters were mailed to the friends and relatives of former members of the church, whose names we gleaned from old records; and to present members and friends. It cost one dollar to light a candle in memory of some dear one. As the returns began to come in with warm messages of appreciation we were much encouraged.

The unusually beautiful service, where tribute was paid to a host of people by their friends and loved ones, was held on Sunday evening at 7:30. The list honored included both the living and the dead. As each name was read a candle was lighted as a token of appreciation and honor, at the request of a friend, relative or group of friends.

The lighting of the candles was done by six boys from one of the classes in the Church School, who had been well trained beforehand as to how this should be done with dignity.

The two hundred and eight candles were arranged in seven tiers upon the platform. The rack to hold these, with holes for the candles "staggered," was made at the mill for five dollars. Palms and ferns made the setting complete.

## A Memorial Candlelighting Service

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The lighting of the groups of candles was interspersed with musical selections by the choir, a sextette, the Congo singers, a musical reading, violin solo, a piano and organ duet, and two vocal solos.

The president of the Women's Society, the vice president, the secretary, and the chairman of the Service of Tribute committee were on the platform with the woman who read the names of those being honored.

As the names were read during the ceremony, the memories of the large congregation present were being carried back in many instances to former days in the life of the church or in their own homes. The occasion made vivid again a warmth of gratitude for parents, loved ones, teachers, pastors and friends, as well as donors of memorials and special gifts to the church.

The Women's Society felt happy to have been instrumental in carrying out such a beautiful and impressive service.

## A GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY SERVICE



FIFTY YEARS of married life brings thoughts of love and memory. What is better than that the couple, once again, present themselves before a minister to ask for the divine blessing upon their union? This service which uses the candle lighting idea may be held in the church or in the home. If in the church the altar of the chancel, or in churches with non-liturgical architecture the communion table may be used.

One lighted candle is on the table. Two unlighted candles, one for the husband and one for the wife, lie flat beside the burning taper. The table on which the candles rest may have flowers or drapery but it will also have a Bible with the pages open to the thirty-first chapter of the Book of Proverbs, verses 10-31.

The room is in darkness except for the one lighted candle. The couple enter, arm in arm, and stand before the lighted candle. Back of the table is the minister. Led by him they repeat together the Lord's prayer.

### *The Minister Speaks:*

Fifty years ago you ..... and you .....  
plighted your troth and entered into the covenant of holy  
marriage. A half century is a long time. It is well that you  
come to renew your vows.

(He turns to the man.)



## A Golden Wedding Anniversary Service

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"Have you ..... (he calls the man by his first name) ought to say to ....., your wife?"

(Taking his wife's right hand in his right hand the husband speaks.)

"N....., fifty years ago I took thee to be my wedded wife. At that time I promised to love, comfort, honor thee and to keep thee in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others to keep me only unto thee, so long as we both should live.

"These years have brought some sorrow, some anxiety and some heaviness of heart to us both. We have experienced trial and tribulations together, but through it all, much happiness has been ours. We have known joys that never could have been ours singly. Our lives have become enriched and our love has been strengthened.

"You have been to me a true helpmate. For that I thank thee and I pledge anew my love to thee."

*Again the minister speaks:*

"And you ..... (he calls the woman by her first name), have you ought to say to your husband?"

The woman takes her husband's right hand in her right hand and says:

"Fifty years ago I, ....., took thee, ....., to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from that day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us should part.

"In serving thee I have found joy, and I, too, pledge anew my love to thee."

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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The minister then reads this prayer of Bishop Slattery.

"O God, our heavenly Father, protect and bless us. Deepen and strengthen our love for each other day by day. Grant that by Thy mercy, neither of us shall ever say one unkind word to the other. Make us and keep us sound and well in body, alert in mind, tender in heart, devout in spirit. O Lord, grant us each to rise to the other's best. Then we pray Thee add to our common life such virtues as only Thou canst give; and so, O Father, consecrate our life and our love completely to the service of all about us, especially those whom Thou hast appointed us to serve, that we may always stand before Thee in happiness and peace, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen."

The woman then picks up one of the unlighted candles and lights it. Then she says:

"I light the flame of loving service which I shall endeavor to keep burning always in my heart for thee."

The husband then lights the other candle, saying as he does so:

"I light the flame of loving devotion whose light I shall endeavor to keep shining in my soul for thee."

"Just as we have taken our light from the light which represents the light of love in our home, so may we, as we build our home together, take our inspiration from Him who is the light of the world."

As they stand with bowed heads the minister pronounces the benediction.

## BUYING CANDLES AND CANDLE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT



SOMETIMES churches, when planning candle light services, rush to the ten cent store to make their purchases. The result will be the cheapest candles manufactured which drip, causing spots on the floors and furniture. The Roman Catholic Church has very rigid requirements for its candles. Manufacturers and dealers know that they must conform to the specifications. Dealers in church supplies, who sell largely to Protestant churches, have been selecting candles of quality for the purpose. Looking through the catalogues of several dealers we find the following information:

First, the best candles are made from beeswax. Another type, not as expensive, but very serviceable, are those made of paraffin and stearine. They usually come in boxes of single size candles or in boxes of sets. They are available in sizes ranging from four and one-half inches in length to candles thirty-two or more inches in length. In sets, one may buy thirteen candles, consisting of one to represent the Christ and twelve to represent the apostles. In one set listed, the Christ candle is twenty inches in length, while the apostle candles in the set are sixteen inches. Another dealer lists complete sets which consist of one candle to represent the Christ, twelve smaller ones to symbolize the apostles and then a sufficient quantity of four inch candles for the congregation.

If the candles are to be carried by members of the congre-

## The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship

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gation, small cards or cups are desirable to prevent the soiling of hands. A candle lighter and extinguisher is available to assist in the servicing of the candles placed on the altar or in other parts of the church.

Candlesticks and candelabra are available in many qualities and sizes. Tradition is against the fastening of the candle holders to the wall. Instead, they should be on floor, communion table or altar. A candelabra, with two, three, seven or twelve candles, is a desirable addition to a well-fitted church chancel and makes a splendid memorial gift. These come in brass, silver or even gold. Remember that the effectiveness of the candles is not in their numbers, but in the symbolism.





## USING CANDLES WITH SAFETY



ANY church which introduces the use of candles should understand that the fire hazard is increased. It is very unusual for fire to start from altar candles in a Catholic church. The reason is that, first of all, the candles are of good quality and second, those who officiate at the altar are well versed in their technique. There will be little danger for any Protestant church which seeks to use candles in this way.

Candle lighting services, however, introduce a new hazard. Children carrying candles can altogether too easily ignite their own garments or those of their comrade. So care and caution should be used. One person tripping while marching in a procession may cause a conflagration. Leaders should understand the danger and quietly have it understood that the procession is to be carefully watched and have individuals posted to watch for any accident. Portable fire extinguishers should be in every church and should be available especially in time of candle light processions.

This may seem over cautious but a single fire is a tragedy which should be averted if it is at all possible.

